




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 9 November 2022

**COAL MINING SAFETY AND HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (11.19 am): I rise to give my contribution to the Coal Mining Safety and Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will be supporting this bill because anything put forward to this House that improves the health and safety of workers in our highly valuable coal industry is well worth supporting. I had the privilege of being a member of the coal workers' black lung disease select committee which laid bare the destruction this disease had on coalminers and their families because of a lack of safety measures to protect coal workers by previous state governments. Speaking from my experience after hearing the stories as part of the CWP Select Committee, it is important that any safety measures that we put in place to protect coalminers working with this valuable energy resource should be fully supported by all members.

The principal objectives of the bill relate to two Queensland government priorities: the first is safety and health—to provide for exceptions to direct employment requirements for coalmining statutory positions; and the second is to enable implementation of a key action in the draft Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan, as well as several housekeeping amendments to a number of acts in the resources portfolio to address operational issues and correct clerical errors. These amendments are necessary due to the shortcomings of the previous bill introduced by the government on 25 May 2020. This is a very messy bill that is designed to tie up loose ends and fix the government's previous mistakes and oversights. However, it is very refreshing to see the Labor government introduce legislation that seeks to assist the coalmining industry to be allowed to operate more effectively.

All Queensland has seen lately is the government's lavish announcements about its Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan which pushes a strong anti-coal agenda. According to the plan, by 2035 Queensland will have no regular reliance on coal and be at 80 per cent renewable energy, yet here we are debating a bill to support the coalmining industry. That seems to be a bit of a contradiction. I can only conclude that the government knows that Queensland cannot survive without the coalmining royalties and the billions of dollars of gross revenue that comes back to the Queensland economy. It is great to see Labor backing coal again and we are hoping to see the kickstart of new coal-fired power stations owned by the state government, with workers' health and safety protected by this legislation, which will in turn help reduce power prices.

The money generated by coalmining to the government pays for roads, pays for hospitals and pays for schools, so it is vital to protect this industry through this legislation because we do not want to see workers out of a job and profits going overseas as a result of more wind and solar farms. The coal-fired power stations that we have across Queensland produce the power and it is sold to the consumer and the consumer gives the money back virtually to the government and those profits are used for hospitals, roads and schools. If we spend money on solar farms and wind farms, taxpayers' money pays big companies to set them up. The power is sold back to the consumer, but then those profits go overseas. What is the benefit of that? It is privatisation by stealth. However, I commend this bill to the House.